

## Team bowls, epiphany

Epiphany is a word to describe...a sudden revelation or awakening.

It came to me twice this week in its relevance to bowls.

Once, hearing the champion AFL Hawthorn footballer announce his retirement yesterday, and second in conversation with a senior state player today at the under 18 interstate bowls event between teams representing Victoria and Tasmania.

The AFL footballer, renowned as a champion by all, said his mode of operation was:

Know your role.

Play your role.

Accept your role.

If only in bowls and our fours teams we could understand that, and apply that idea, as part of our game plan. That champion footballer has been in premiership teams four times in seven years and I bet as much because he and the others in their team knew, played, accepted.

Their role fitted into a game plan orchestrated by the coach, trained with intensity in readiness for the competition and adhered to as much as is possible in the game itself.

Boy oh boy the message keeps ringing out loud, yet the deaf in our sport cannot hear, will not listen even if the message is heard.

The conversation I had with the state player was a revelation, though possibly dispiriting with the first part and enlightening with the second.

I asked him did he ever experience great skips in state / national representation and he nominated only one. Too often he found the skip was interested in preserving his position in front of selectors and not interested in maximizing the skills of the individuals in the team in their selected role. Game plan and specific job description in your role, asks I? Forget it pal! And what about the selectors; another story.

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And then I sought his own insights as an experienced player and wow I liked it. He had followed the team dictum of strive for second shot yet as he said, we can get second every end and lose 0-21. Not much value in that he realizes. Why not aim to be shot every delivery possible so as to win the game and keep up the attack says he. Love it.

Might I say that the idea of getting second shot is to minimize losing big numbers when we lose an end, not being second every end. And bowls in the head from the front end will do that for the team.

Now if I was to apply his approach as coach as a part of our team game plan, the measurable role aim could be thus:

The front end to be holding shot	11/21 ends
The third to finish deliveries holding shot	11/21 ends.

In the context of a season of pennant competition as is the case here in Australia, once a few games are finalized and we find that 11/21 is not enough to win future games, we up the ante for the rest of the season and we might find those stats. Have to be 13/21 in both roles for us to know what is a winning formula, performance.

If you know what is required of you then the skip has an easier role in steering our ship, if they convey the prescribed roles well before the game. Best prescribed and tried via training together.

Here's to never stop learning.

**Lachlan Tighe, 12 July 2017**